

Ministers:

<http://centralhall.info/>

Rev Stephen Willey
Deacon Sheila Dawson

Summer 2022

Dear Members of Central Hall Church Family,

I hope you will enjoy our latest ministers' letter. As Sheila is on Sabbatical this is actually just from me (Stephen). Sheila will return around 9th August and it will be good to see her again!

Mission and outreach

The leadership team (along with Ade, our business project manager) met with the Birmingham Methodist District recently for a review of our work at Coventry Central Hall. The meeting was a positive one and I think the District was impressed by our work here and how we have managed, despite many challenges, to keep our building in use and continue God's work in this church.

We are looking a bit different since the pandemic struck but I believe we should not be worried. We are thinner, and perhaps fitter, as signs of a new kind of church emerges from our roots, which are essential for our blossoming in the future. A particular area for rejoicing is our international congregation and the diversity of those using the building during the week. Just today I was talking with people from four continents, reminding me that God's creation is rich and wonderful.

Whilst we can be positive about our own mission, Methodism in the UK is facing many challenges. Within our Coventry and Nuneaton Circuit we must consider future staffing levels and what we can afford to do, not least because congregations are mostly smaller post-Covid.

Café

The café can be a place where people get to know our church and other people using our building. Here we can build trust and encourage people to become more involved with Central Hall life.

Since Urban Goodies left, we have been talking with parties interested in running the café. In the next few weeks we hope for a firm proposal which we will discuss as a church leadership team and share with Church Council. Whilst we need to support our income as a church, we also need the café to be a place where all are welcome. The atmosphere in the café makes a significant difference to the perception people have of our church. Hopefully we can all use the café and make it a place of welcome once more and, for us, a place where Jesus can also be known.

What's on at Coventry Central Hall?

Since the first lockdown, Fridays, a Taekwondo group (with Olympic athletes in it) and the drumming group, Global Creative Art Group (GCAG) that performed at the Commonwealth games opening ceremony, have partnered with us in one way or another. Central Creatives (based at Central Hall) is involved in providing part of our City of Culture legacy and together with GCAG are offering **Drum therapy workshops** starting in September.

Other events and activities to look forward to include:

- **Coffee Shop Sundae** on **Sunday 21st August**. Including open mic, music and testimony.
- **Motofest Family Fun** on **Saturday September 10th**
- **Confidence through photography** have an exhibition on **August 20th**. (They work with people lacking confidence or struggling with mental or physical health and may be lonely).
- Our very own **drama club** will be starting in the **autumn** - We have invited ITV and other production companies to be involved. Please get involved too!

There will be many other events in late autumn and leading up to Christmas and the New Year.

Getting involved

If you are interested in any of the above or knowing more about events or activities, please volunteer to be involved in some way. You probably know best what you can do! Volunteers expand the work of our church and create the potential to reach out as a Central Mission should.

My thanks go to those who are offering support with administration and focusing on other aspects of the work we do as a church to strengthen our church family and encourage one another. This is very important after the pandemic, building up the body of Christ in, and beyond, our building.

Building and business

Recent events have included a local school graduation ceremony with up to 1000 young people in the main hall. Disabled children were unable to use the stage to receive their awards – this is an example of why the property project is so important. I hope we can make the whole building accessible throughout. When we have raised enough funding, we are almost certainly going to start the work on the back of the building and the stage. This would make several rooms accessible (including the social room) and enable disabled people to perform on our stage. We do have to wait until funding is in place, however, and would appreciate additional support with this – on a very practical level (eg typing, filling in forms, sending out letters, recording responses).

On another matter, Church Council recently met with Central Hall Venues, a company based in Westminster Central Hall in London. They are interested in using our building for commercial lettings. In some ways they would take a lot of work off the shoulders of our Church Council, but, as we are still emerging from the crisis with many positive new activities and partnerships, as well as the property project, it may be too early to take such a significant change of direction.

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Keeping in touch

Please get in touch if you would like any further information about anything in this letter, and please remember, as always, if you feel isolated or you'd like one of us to get in touch, you can contact our pastoral secretary, Doreen, our senior steward, Elaine, Deacon Sheila, or Rev Stephen.

With love and prayers,

Stephen